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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7601st meeting

Wednesday, 13 January 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bermúdez	(Uruguay)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/940)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Thirty-seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/940)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou Souleymane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/940, which contains the thirty-seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Mindaoudou.

Ms. Mindaoudou (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council today on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2015/940) and to inform it about major recent developments in the country, including the presidential election of 25 October 2015 and the challenges that remain to be addressed.

Since the last time I briefed the Council (see S/PV.7459), Côte d'Ivoire has dealt with a huge challenge — the holding of a presidential election. The people of Côte d'Ivoire voted peacefully and re-elected President Alassane Ouattara to a second term. The voting, conducted in an atmosphere of calm, has given the people of Côte d'Ivoire the opportunity to definitively turn the page on the previous political crisis, begin a new chapter in their country's history and consolidate the progress they have made towards long-term stability. Despite the withdrawal of three candidates and the arrest and detention of several persons for organizing unauthorized political gatherings and demonstrations, the national authorities, including the security forces, proved that they were capable of taking charge of the organization and safeguarding of the voting process. I would like to take this opportunity to once again commend the efforts of the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure that the election was held without any major problems, and to thank all of Côte d'Ivoire's bilateral and multilateral partners for their technical, financial and logistical support.

In the run-up to the presidential election of 25 October, through my good offices, the Government and the opposition parties resumed a productive dialogue, which helped to ensure an environment conducive to the holding of a peaceful election. In that regard, I would like to commend the Government for its efforts to respond to the opposition's demands ahead of the election. The implementation of the mission mandate and my good offices through dedicated forums enabled us to engage civil society, traditional, religious and community leaders, youth groups and women's associations in working tirelessly to ensure an atmosphere conducive to a free and democratic presidential election.

Côte d'Ivoire is now the second-largest economy in West Africa, which represents a remarkable recovery. It is now hoped that the people of Côte d'Ivoire will fully enjoy the dividends of the economic growth. National reconciliation, however, lags behind economic recovery. In this regard, I welcome President Ouattara's statement in which he indicated his determination to make national reconciliation a priority of his second term. Without losing time, on 7 December 2015 President Ouattara began his consultation on the subject with the executive committee of the chamber of traditional kings and chiefs of Côte D'Ivoire, and met with religious leaders and representatives of the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims in Côte d'Ivoire. Further to these consultations, President Ouattara granted presidential pardon to 3,100 prisoners, including some from the post-electoral crisis.

Progress in the prosecution of alleged perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis remains slow. I urge the Government to complete the investigations of the Special Investigation and Examination Cell so as to create the conditions to prosecute all those alleged to have committed serious

abuses and violations of human rights, regardless of their political affiliation.

I note the growing participation of women in public forums and seminars, whether as representatives of their political parties or in order to voice their concerns on matters of national interest. This trend augurs well for the increased participation of women in future elections and ultimately in decision-making positions. I note the Government's intention to make women's empowerment a priority during the President's second term. A great deal of effort has gone into the prevention of sexual- and gender-based violence and support for victims, but the prosecution of alleged perpetrators remains hesitant. The strengthening of the judicial system to properly address such cases in a timely manner is critical if such behaviour is to be curbed for good.

Ensuring security throughout the national territory during the electoral process was a test for the Ivorian security forces. Despite some shortcomings, the national police, endarmerie and armed forces met the challenge. To maintain this momentum, it is important that the law on the organization of the defence sector and the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire, adopted by the National Assembly on 9 March, be promulgated. This legislation is an important step towards the transformation of the security sector, in particular the professionalization and accountability of the army. Furthermore, efforts to gradually reduce the gender gap and to restore the confidence of the population must be maintained.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has completed its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, as it had planned. However, the continued support of Côte d'Ivoire's bilateral and multilateral partners will be necessary to support reinsertion programmes for the residual caseload of combatants, with a view to translating reinsertion into long-term reintegration.

The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains stable, with violent crimes still on the downward trend since the Secretary-General issued his last report (S/2015/320). During the electoral period, no serious security incidents were reported by the population or the candidates. However, armed robberies and banditry, as well as threats of terrorist attacks, remain a challenge. An attack claimed by the terrorist group Ansar Dine in southern Mali, close to the border with Côte D'Ivoire, prompted the Government to deploy its security forces along the border with Mali. In that regard, UNOCI deployed its quick-reaction force in June and July to support the military operation undertaken by the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) along the border.

Threats of cross-border attacks remain, particularly along the Liberian border, where the most recent attack on two FRCI posts on 2 December resulted in the deaths of seven FRCI soldiers and injuries to four assailants, and along the Ghanaian border, where an attack on a FRCI post on 27 December resulted in two arrests but no casualties. The Ivorian Government is increasingly capable of addressing immediate and latent security threats, domestic and external alike. Its effectiveness, however, hinges on the adequate equipping and resourcing of the police, the security forces and the army.

The land border between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia remains closed as a precaution against the Ebola virus disease, but information-sharing between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI has continued. Humanitarian corridors were also opened on 18 and 22 December 2015 to allow for the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia, facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Mr. Zarif, and I witnessed the departure and arrival of refugees on 18 December 2015.

Pursuant to resolution 2226 (2015), the authorized strength of the UNOCI military component stands at 5,437, and that of the police at 1,500. Taking into account the successful conduct of the 2015 presidential election, the improving security situation on the ground and the growing capacity of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to ensure security in the country, UNOCI is ready to implement the provisions of paragraph 65 of the Secretary-General's report of 15 May 2014 (S/2014/342). This will entail the further reduction of the UNOCI force to slightly fewer than 4,000 troops by 31 March. A strategic review team will deploy in February for the purpose of developing recommendations on the further downsizing of UNOCI military and police, and the future of the mission, as requested by the Council.

Challenges remain in Côte d'Ivoire, notwithstanding the successful holding of the presidential election and the improving security situation on the ground. The ongoing national reconciliation process; the strengthening of the security sector, in particular the reform of the army and the police; the sustainable reinsertion and reintegration of former combatants; and improvements in the human rights situation and in transitional justice are all key

challenges facing Côte d'Ivoire on the path to durable stability, as is the holding of legislative elections in December. The Ivorian institutions will have the complex task of organizing and securing an electoral process involving hundreds of candidates all over the country. These elections are crucial, and should involve the full political spectrum in Cote d'Ivoire, as they will be an opportunity for the opposition to participate and secure seats in the National Assembly in the context of a vibrant democracy.

In all of these issues, the combined support of the Security Council, Member States, international and regional partners, and the United Nations system remains essential to the Côte D'Ivoire's ability to complete all these key processes without delay. I thank the Security Council once again for its invaluable support to the implementation of the UNOCI mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Mindaoudou for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte D'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, Sir, to reiterate the congratulations of my Government on the election of your country to the Security Council as a non-permanent member, as well as on your first month in the Council and your accession to its presidency. It is my great pleasure to note that your country now chairs the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004), concnering Côte d'Ivoire. I am delighted by this appointment and assure you of my country's full cooperation to ensure the success that the Council has just conferred upon you. I take this opportunity to express also our great admiration for Chile and Ambassador Cristián Barros Melet, who has admirably chaired the work of the Committee in recent years.

I also wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, and her team for their outstanding work in cooperation with the Ivorian authorities and French forces in Côte d'Ivoire. My delegation takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/940).

In 2015, political life in Côte d'Ivoire was marked by the organization of the presidential election. The election took place on 30 October 2015, and turnout was 51.86 per cent. According to national and international observers, the vote was free, transparent, fair and inclusive. Following the count, the candidate Alassane Ouattara obtained 83.88 per cent of the votes cast and was immediately congratulated by the other candidates in a spirit of republicanism and fair play. Thus, the presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire took place in a very peaceful and almost cordial political context, reflecting the resolve of the Ivorian people to turn its back once and for all on the past in order to focus on progress and development. This success should be attributed to the Ivorians themselves, and above all the political class and the people. It is also the fruit of exemplary cooperation among the United Nations system, the French forces and the Ivorian authorities. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its gratitude to the French forces and to the agencies and forces of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire.

At his inauguration, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, announced the main areas of reform of this five-year term and underscored the attention he will focus in this final term in office on national reconciliation and the adoption of a new constitution to guarantee equality for all, national cohesion and institutional stability. Putting his words into action, the President of the Republic has started initial consultations to that end. In December 2015, in an atmosphere of great openness, he met with representatives of the traditional chiefs, whose proposals were very important to him, and he pledged to consider them very carefully. In the same spirit and at the same time, he also met with the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims and with religious leaders, and commended their contribution to the smooth running of the presidential election. In his new year message to the nation, the Head of State decided to release about 3,100 prisoners, many of whom had been detained following the post-electoral crisis of 2011. He contributed thereby to reducing tension within the political climate in the country.

The success of the presidential election, like the social and political context in which it took place, embodies the dynamic of progress made over recent years on many fronts, in particular reconciliation, which I mentioned earlier; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme; and reform of the judicial system and the security sector. The DDR operation was completed on 30 June 2015, in line with the stipulated time table. That process resulted in the collection of 39,279 weapons, including 35,628 assault rifles, Kalashnikovs and grenades; 3,651 shells and rockets; and 3,277,000 munitions. The reintegration

programme has to date assisted 57,514 former combattants, out of 74,068 in the 2012 database. That is an implementation rate of 94 per cent for this project.

In terms of resource mobilization, I underscore that, of a total of 84,740,953 CFA francs necessary for the financing of the DDR process, 20,346,932 CFA francs have been collected from partners. That is 24 per cent of the total resources earmarked for Côte d'Ivoire. Given these remarkable results, the National Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration has been replaced by a more flexible structure, the Coordination and Social Reintegration Cell, under the National Security Council, responsible for assisting and guiding former combatants.

The reform of the justice sector is also under way with a view, inter alia, to facilitating access to justice for all, completing the post-crisis judicial procedures, combating impunity and ensuring more effective protection for human rights. On behalf of my Government, I wish to thank the United States of America, France and the European Union, which have stood beside us in this important reform.

Reforms undertaken in the security sector for the period 2012-2016 have already shown promising signs of success. Of the 93 reforms that need to be implemented, 34 were completed by late September 2015, representing an implementation rate is 31.62 per cent. To date, 44 reforms are being implemented and 12 remain to be started. The security index over a three-year period decreased from 3.2 to 1.11 in 2015, enabling Côte d'Ivoire to achieve a satisfactory level that is likely to guarantee its stability and development. My Government reiterates its request for the total lifting of the arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire in order to ensure that our defence and security forces can be properly equipped so as to better monitor our borders, particularly in the west.

The outstanding progress implemented on the ground, to which I referred earlier, and the restored stability lead us to anticipate the time when my country can be removed from the agenda of the Security Council under Chapter VII so that, as the President of the Republic said in his latest message to the nation, we can return in the very near future to the traditional relations of a country at peace with our shared Organization.

The announced participation of the so-called radical opposition in the upcoming legislative elections confirms once again the return to a peaceful political climate and that democracy and peace have taken root in Côte d'Ivoire. My Government therefore believes that the end of 2017, and if necessary 2018, will be a propitious and perfectly feasible deadline for the withdrawal of UNOCI. My country is confident that the United Nations country team, bolstered by its experience on the ground and its acquired skills, is perfectly qualified to continue, if necessary, residual activities. With regard to security and defence matters, the exemplary cooperation between the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire and the international forces has allowed the Ivorian Army to strengthen its capabilities and ensure the security of the country.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the members of the Security Council and to wish everyone a happy new year in 2016.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.